

2.C.6. Land Tenure

Profile

Current Level and Locations of Use

Land tenure, or land ownership adjustment, refers to actions that result in the disposal of BLM lands or the acquisition of nonfederal lands or interests by BLM. BLM policy is to seek to retain and acquire lands in special management areas or with high resource value suitable for management by BLM through purchase, exchange, or donation. Land ownership adjustment proposals in the planning area are analyzed in project-specific reviews. Since the 1987 RMP, the Jarbidge FO disposed of 81.6 acres through exchange and 40 acres through sale. The Jarbidge FO acquired 952 acres through exchange and 295 acres through Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) acquisitions. These acquisitions allowed BLM to acquire a large natural spring at the Dean Site, Morgan Property, and Three Island Crossing, important cultural and paleontological sites.

The Desert Land Act of 1877 was passed to encourage and promote the economic development of the arid and semi-arid public lands of the western US. Through the Act, individuals may apply for a DLE to reclaim, irrigate, and cultivate arid and semi-arid lands. Over 200 DLEs have been relinquished or rejected in the planning area since 1987, either by default or inability to support a profitable plan of development due to water rights reviews by the State of Idaho through the Snake River Basin Adjudication. The resolution of those entries placed the land back into retention status. There are currently three active DLE applications for 960 acres in the FO.

Forecasted Use

Areas adjacent to private lands, such as Bell Rapids, Black Mesa, Farm Development, and Three Creek, will still be desirable for land tenure adjustments. Many agricultural lands near the planning area are being placed in the Federal Conservation Reserve Program, which provides payments to farmers in lieu of crop production. This, along with the lack of available water, may result in fewer applications for DLE.

Key Features

As mandated by FLPMA, public lands are retained in Federal ownership, with the exception of public lands that have potential for disposal. Public lands have potential for disposal when they are isolated and/or difficult to manage. Lands identified for disposal must meet public objectives, such as community expansion and economic development. Other lands can be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis. Disposal actions are usually in response to public request or application that results in a title transfer, wherein the lands leave the public domain.

Public land sales are managed under the disposal criteria set forth in Section 203 of FLPMA. Public lands determined suitable for sale shall be offered on the initiative of the BLM and sold at not less than fair market value. Public lands classified as withdrawn, reserved, or otherwise designated as not available or subject to sale are unavailable for sale or exchange.

Most requests from private individuals to acquire public land involve public lands surrounded by or adjacent to their private land. This is due to the proximity of farm operations, grazing, and residential properties and the need to either expand operations or make operations more efficient.

Individuals have inquired about lands located in Bell Rapids, Black Mesa, Saylor Creek, Farm Development, Magic Waters, Bruneau Arm, and Indian Cove in addition to requests for lands in the southern portion of the planning area.

The Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) of 2000, allows for the monies from the sale or equalization payments from exchanges of public lands to be used by the BLM to purchase additional public lands. This act applies to lands identified in land use plans as suitable for disposal as of July 25, 2000.

Current Management

The 1987 Jarbidge RMP identified 90,366 acres of public land for possible transfer from public ownership through sale, exchange, or DLE. Acres identified for sale, sale or exchange, or exchange are still available for those land tenure actions. A land exchange was completed to make acres available for DLE/CA development; however, under current policy the Jarbidge FO is no longer accepting DLE applications due to the moratorium on new water rights in the area. Acres identified for retention, including those in the Bruneau KGRA have been retained. The 1987 Jarbidge RMP identified acres closed to agricultural entry.

Management Opportunities

Acquisitions of lands with resource values needing protection, and disposal of lands of no special value or public interest or where administration is difficult or not cost effective due to access could be a focus of the Jarbidge FO acquisition and disposal program. Lands can be acquired through exchange, donation, or opportunities provided through means such as the LWCF.

Criteria could be developed in the RMP to identify and prioritize State or privately owned lands within the planning area that have important ecological value. This could be possible in the Bell Rapids area as it is now used for dryland grazing instead of irrigated farming.

A parcel of land not identified by legal description in the 1987 RMP can not be sold or exchanged without a plan amendment. The revised RMP could identify lands for disposal without identifying parcels by legal description through a zoning concept.

Some lands identified in the 1987 Jarbidge RMP still may be considered for sale or exchange; however, each parcel needs to be reviewed and evaluated to determine if the parcel should remain listed for disposal through sale. Some lands identified for sale or exchange in the 1987 RMP may be suitable for retention as some of the adjacent private lands will be used for different purposes than those at the time of the 1987 Jarbidge RMP. The revised RMP could consider opportunities to consolidate State lands through land exchanges.

The revised RMP may consider not accepting new applications under DLE/CA due to the current moratorium on water rights.

Land tenure decisions still valid from previous plans could be referenced in the new plan so that any funds generated from the sale or exchange of these lands would qualify under FLTFA.

2.C.7. Land Use Authorizations

Profile

Current Level and Locations of Use

The Jarbidge FO administers approximately 300 ROWs, land use permits, and. These existing grants are for a variety of different uses and are held by private individuals and groups, as well as by various business and government entities. Roads, power transmission lines, and telephone lines are the most common uses for ROWs and account for well over half of the total number of grants. Examples of additional types of ROW facilities authorized within the planning area include natural gas pipelines, communication sites, ditches, water facilities, and fiber optic lines. Wind energy developments are another type of ROW that is starting to occur within the FO (see Renewable Energy). The Jarbidge FO processes approximately 20 to 30 ROW actions annually, including new authorizations, amendments, assignments, renewals, and relinquishments. Since the 1987 Jarbidge RMP, there has been an increase in the number of utility services, power line upgrades, roads to private residences, communications sites, and upgrades to existing land use authorizations. Unauthorized uses have increased as well.

Twelve communication site ROWs, occupying seven different communication site locations, are authorized within the Jarbidge FO. Potential users are encouraged to locate within existing communication facilities, but the existing facilities can only accommodate a certain number of users. The two largest communication sites within the Jarbidge FO are the Yahoo Creek Communication Site and the Lower Salmon Communication Site, both of which have completed communication site plans. There are no site plans for any of the other communication site facilities because of their single-occupant status.

The 1987 RMP did not formally designated ROW corridors within the planning area. The West-wide Energy Corridor PEIS, authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (PL 109-58), may designate ROW corridors in the planning area (DOE). In general, attempts are made to group compatible facilities where possible. Special designation areas, such as ACECs and WSAs, restrict such development.

One lease under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1954 (R&PP) within the Jarbidge FO was transferred to patent to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation in 1993 for the Three Island State Park southwest of Glenns Ferry. Three Island State Park contains the Oregon Trail crossing of the Snake River by settlers in the early 1840s through the late 1860s. The park is used by travelers and tourists from all over the world.

Section 302 of FLPMA authorizes the use, occupancy, and development of public lands through leases and permits for uses not authorized through other authorities. Applicants can be State or local governments or private individuals or entities. These authorizations of uses of public lands contribute to agricultural development, residential use under certain conditions, commercial use, advertising, and military training. Permits are usually short-term authorizations not to exceed three years. There are ten Section 302 FLPMA temporary land use permits within the Jarbidge FO. There is one airport lease and several access easements within the planning area.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) withdrawals on portions of the Snake River

within the planning area have been reviewed and found no longer suitable for hydroelectric power. Six emitter sites are included as part of the Juniper Butte Training Range withdrawal by the USAF in addition to ancillary uses to these withdrawals, such as power lines, telephone lines, and roads. Other withdrawals in the Jarbidge FO include public water reserves, water power reserves, and power site reserves and classifications.

Forecasted Use

Based on staff observations, applications for roads, power lines, telephone lines, and communication site facilities will continue to increase as the population increases in and around the planning area. The need for rights-of-way across public land to privately owned lands may increase with some of the more populated areas in and around the planning area, such as Hagerman, Bell Rapids, King Hill Canal, Glenns Ferry, and Hammett. The need for easements to public land through private land will increase as well.

Key Features

Most land use authorizations involve private land bordering public land to service agricultural farms and residents. Communication site potential will increase in sites that have relatively high points that will allow for adequate line of site for the particular use.

Current Management

The 1987 Jarbidge RMP created utility avoidance areas at paleontologic sites at Glenns Ferry and Pasadena Valley. Utility avoidance and restricted areas were created in Saylor Creek Gunnery Range (now Saylor Creek Air Force Range), Sand Point Paleontological Area, the Oregon NHT, Dove Springs, 96 paleontologic sites, recommended suitable wilderness areas, ACECs, suitable Wild and Scenic River areas, the Dry Lakes/Bruneau River Complex, Post Office Cultural Area, Juniper Ranch Complex, Clover Creek Complex, and Devil Creek Complex.

Programmatic policies and BMPs in the *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States* (BLM, 2005b) amended the 1987 RMP. Wind energy development is restricted from wildlife habitat where adverse effects cannot be mitigated.

Management Opportunities

The 1987 RMP analyzed the trends for public land uses and the need for ROWs, permits, and leases for the period it was written; however, no utility corridors were identified. The Westwide Energy Corridor EIS is proposes sites north of the planning area with an alternative route south of the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument running northwest through the Jarbidge FO. The Final PEIS will provide a plan amendment decision addressing numerous energy corridor related issues, including the utilization of existing corridors (enhancements and upgrades), identification of new corridors, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project planning efforts. It is likely the identification of corridors in the PEIS will affect the Jarbidge planning area.

The revised RMP will need to determine where utility avoidance areas should located.

2.D. Special Designation

2.D.1. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Profile

Three ACECs are located in the Jarbidge FO (Figure 39).

Sand Point Paleontologic, Geologic, and Cultural Resources ACEC

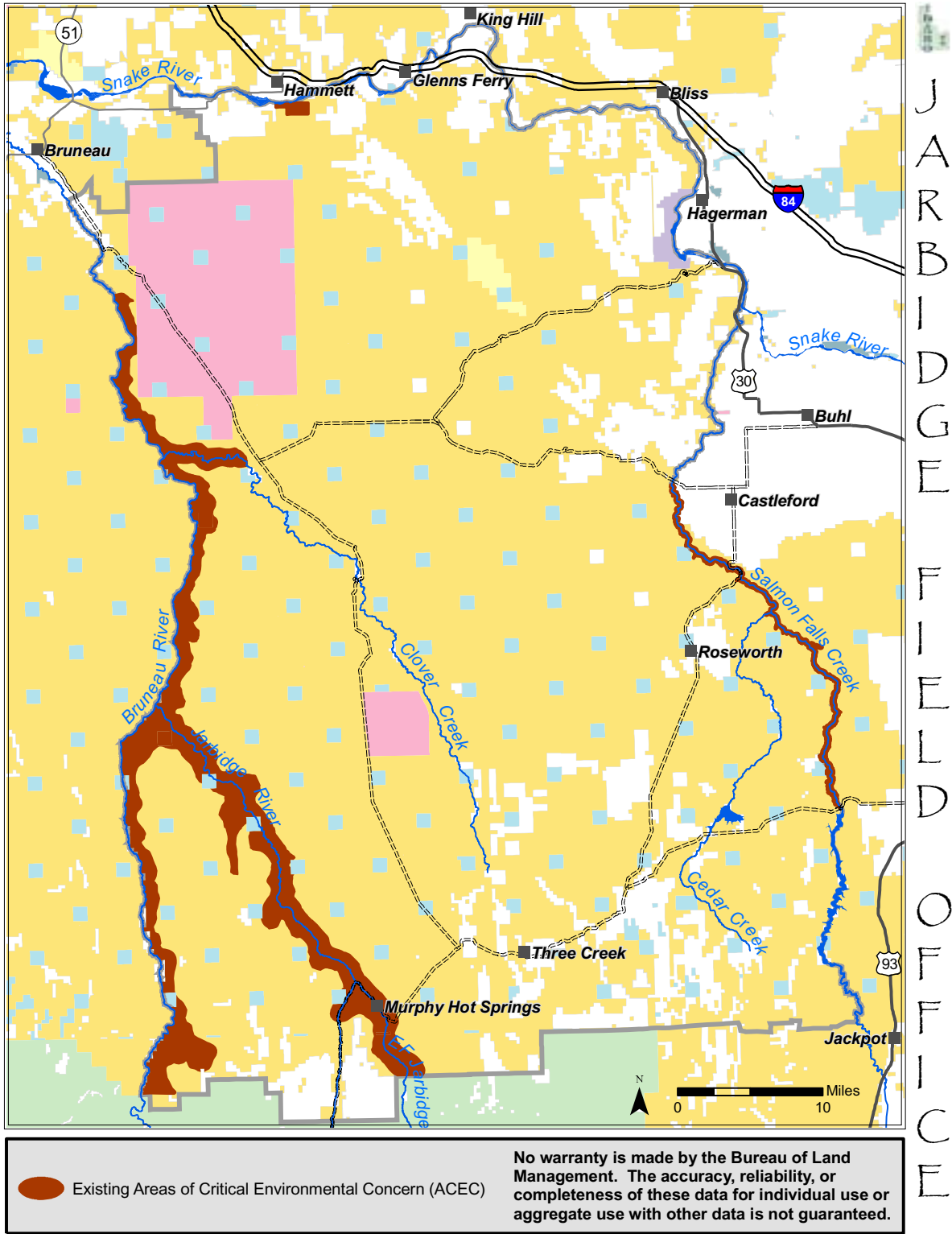
The Sand Point Paleontologic, Geologic, and Cultural Resources ACEC is located along the Snake River and consists of approximately 800 acres of BLM land near the mouth of Sailor Creek. The area contains an important paleontological area for aquatic invertebrates and fish of the Glens Ferry Formation. The Sand Point ACEC meets the relevance criteria for ACEC due to the presence of important cultural values including prehistoric Native American habitation, the historic Medbury Ferry Crossing, and a 1-mile section of the Oregon NHT. Vehicle activity, previous mining, and amateur collection of artifacts have damaged the trail and cultural sites. The Snake River contains winter and foraging habitat for bald eagles, and year-round habitat for Idaho springsnail and white sturgeon. Bald eagles were delisted in July 2007 and Idaho springsnail are currently being assessed for delisting (72 FR 37346, 71 FR 56938).

Sand Point offers horizontal sediments with over 300 vertical feet of exposure. The site's elevational position is between the older Hagerman site and younger sites at Chalk Flat, Flat Iron Butte, and Grandview. The invertebrate specimens, vertebrate specimens and geologic setting continue to be important sources of information on Cenozoic biostratigraphy, paleoecology, and paleogeography (BLM, 1988) making the site nationally significant for studies on Cenozoic mollusk fossils. At least eight sites have been examined within the ACEC for paleontologic resources. Twenty-nine paleontologic articles have been published citing this area or specific fossils from this area.

Fossil-bearing layers extend east and westward from the Sand Point sites. The fish fossils are the most advanced and represent the last occurrence of a diversity of minnows, suckers, sculpins, catfish, and sunfish in western North America. The vertebrate fossils present at Sand Point are fragile, rare and an irreplaceable resource particularly vulnerable to loss and destruction (BLM, 1988). The Sand Point local fauna is among the largest Blancan (Pliocene - 3 million years before present) freshwater mollusk fauna in the United States in terms of abundance of specimens. The extensive molluscan fauna far exceeds the abundance found at any other Idaho Blancan localities.

The ACEC is vegetated with four general plant communities: black greasewood/annual grassland, non-native annual grassland, and a riparian zone. The entire Sand Point ACEC burned in 1984 in the Cheat II fire. A non-native perennial grassland (crested wheatgrass/four-wing saltbush seeding) was planted following the Cheat II fire. Wilson Grade, located on a steep slope with several small gullies and rills, is the main access into the ACEC. Half of the ACEC has soils on steep slopes categorized as severe for water erosion (SCS, 1991).

Figure 39. Locations of Current ACECs



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Incompatible uses or threats to resources in the ACEC are existing mining claims, development on the tableland above the rim, motorized use off existing roads, and, to a lesser extent, livestock trailing on steep slopes (BLM, 1987, 1988).

Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC for Bighorn Sheep and Cultural Resources

The Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC includes the East Fork Jarbidge River from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest boundary and extends northwest to the Bruneau-Jarbidge River confluence. It includes portions of Arch Canyon, Clover, Columbet, Dave, Deep, Dorsey, and Poison Creeks. The ACEC contains approximately 85,000 acres of BLM land, extending beyond the canyon rim to adjacent uplands in varying widths. Idaho Department of Lands owns 1,400 acres of land within the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC boundary. Approximately 52,000 acres of the ACEC overlay the Jarbidge River and Bruneau-Sheep Creek. Relevance for the ACEC includes important wildlife, geologic, scenic, natural, and cultural values.

Fish and Wildlife Values

The bull trout population in the Jarbidge River is the southernmost existing population of bull trout in North America (FWS, 2004) and occupy a unique and unusual ecological setting. Their loss would result in a substantial modification of the species' range. These bull trout are the only species of fish within the planning area that are Federally listed under the ESA. The bull trout in the Jarbidge River are unique in that a portion of their habitat is in an area categorized as semi-arid desert. The Rocky Mountain juniper dominated riparian zone interspersed with aspen on BLM portions of the Jarbidge River grades into aspen and limber pine on USFS land, which is unique to the area. The majority of the other occupied bull trout stream habitat in other areas is in other coniferous forest types (e.g., Douglas fir and Englemann spruce) (see Special Status Aquatic Resources).

The Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC contains over 100 miles of canyon lands for a population of California bighorn sheep, a BLM Sensitive species. Approximately 20% of the Idaho population of California bighorn sheep, 120 sheep, are found in this ACEC. The Foundation for North American Wild Sheep and IDFG were instrumental in re-introducing California bighorn into the Bruneau and Jarbidge River canyons in the 1980s and early 1990s. The canyon lands provide for secure lambing habitat, and rivers in the canyon bottoms as well as occasional seeps from canyon walls provide water. Bighorn forage in both the canyons and adjacent uplands. The vast majority of bighorn observations are within the canyon and on the upland plateau about 1 mile from the canyon rim. Bighorn sheep typically avoid human disturbance and can be socially displaced from otherwise suitable habitat by concentrations of other ungulates, including elk and cattle (Wilson et al., 1983). Bighorn sheep are known to avoid portions of their habitat that have greater human disturbance. This can increase the risk of inbreeding and disease, as well as degradation of the higher-use portions of their habitat. California bighorn sheep tags for hunts in this area are in high demand and attract applicants from across the United States.

The ACEC contains habitat for a number of other Sensitive animal species including

prairie falcon, mountain quail, peregrine falcon, sage-grouse, spotted bat, Townsend big-eared bat, and redband trout.

Habitat within the ACEC is regionally important to wintering big game from parts of Nevada and Idaho including mule deer, pronghorn, and elk. Bighorn sheep, mule deer, and pronghorn are featured big game species in Idaho, and mule deer and elk are featured species in Nevada. About half of the wintering mule deer in the planning area use portions of the ACEC as winter range. Wintering mule deer include both resident and migratory herds. Pronghorn wintering in the Diamond A are also a mix of resident and migratory herds. The majority of elk found wintering in the area are from Nevada.

Botanical Values

The vast majority of the global population of the endemic Bruneau River phlox, an Idaho BLM Sensitive species, is present within the ACEC. The Bruneau River phlox is an endemic plant unique to the area. Nearly all of the known global occurrences for this species are present in the Bruneau and Jarbidge River Canyons in Idaho. Bruneau River phlox is ranked as critically imperiled throughout its range based on its rarity with a total estimated population of approximately 400 plants. The Idaho populations are currently relatively stable (Rosentreter et al., 2007).

The ACEC also contains the only known population of Cusick's primula in Nevada. Cusick's primula "complex" is categorized as a Watch species in Idaho, and may become a Sensitive species in the future. Cusick's primula is not known in any other location within the planning area.

Scenic Values

The canyon complex has exceptional rugged desert scenic and natural qualities. The canyons plunge from 300 to over 900 feet from the adjacent upland plateaus to the rivers below. They include both basalt and rhyolite forms of volcanic material, and rhyolite columns and spires are present through much of the Jarbidge River Canyon. The lower portion of the Bruneau River contains basalt canyons and rims. Arch Canyon contains a unique large natural arch composed of rhyolite that spans Cougar Creek. Scenic values are outstanding and the rivers have been recommended as suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. Several access locations are available for public viewing into the canyon. Areas such as Arch Canyon, the Jarbidge River, and Bruneau River attract visitors from across the west. The Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers provide a nationally known white water recreation experience.

Cultural Resource Values

Native Americans occupied the area for the past 12,000 years or more. Previous inventories documented a number of important archaeological sites. Regionally significant cultural resources are present within the ACEC including rock art, rock shelters, and other archaeological sites. The geologic landforms provided habitation as well as habitat for a variety of food sources used by the indigenous people including elk, bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn, other fish and wildlife, and a wide variety of plants used as food, for medicinal purposes, twine, and other uses. The area is important to the

Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone Bannock Tribes.

Habitat Evaluation

Plant communities within this ACEC consist of non-native annual grassland, non-native perennial grassland, black sagebrush/Sandburg bluegrass, low sagebrush/Idaho fescue, Wyoming big sagebrush/Sandburg bluegrass and/or bluebunch wheatgrass, mountain big sagebrush/Idaho fescue, mountain shrub and salt desert shrub habitats.

Fifty random points were generated in 2006 to assess the habitat quality in the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC. Eight of the points were on cliffs and talus slopes within the Bruneau and Jarbidge River Canyons and were not evaluated due to difficult access. BLM field crews checked 42 of 50 points and placed them in habitat categories. The line-point method was used to collect data on shrubs, native grass, non-native annual grasses, non-native perennial grasses, native forbs, non-native forbs, rock, litter on the ground, biological soil crusts, and bare ground.

Two habitats, Wyoming big sagebrush and salt desert shrub, were the most common of the habitats on the upland plateau totaling 42% of the plots sampled. Non-native habitats were present at about 26% of the sampled locations.

Approximately 7% of the ACEC burned in wildfires between 1957 and 1982. Since 1983, another 7% of the ACEC burned; most of which had not burned between 1957 and 1982. The majority of the fires within the ACEC were not rehabilitated because much of the area is in WSA. As a result, many areas in the ACEC are dominated by non-native vegetation.

Native perennial grasslands contain the highest amount of cheatgrass of the native sites sampled. Fires facilitated the invasion by non-native annuals. At unburned native sites, shrub cover averaged about 20%. In salt desert shrub habitats, there was a mixture of shrubs including Wyoming big sagebrush, spiny hopsage, shadscale, and rabbitbrush. Vegetative cover at salt desert shrub habitats was relatively low, less than 35% (Table 60). Typically, salt desert shrub communities have naturally low precipitation (7-10 inches per year) and more alkaline soils, which influence vegetation. The amount of rock in these sites was also relatively high at 19%. Due to the time of year the sampling was conducted, grasses species were not identified, and native forbs may be somewhat under-represented.

Two of the plots were near playas. Livestock concentration in these areas has resulted in more bare ground and an increase in non-native plants compared to the same habitat more than 1 mile from water.

OHV use near Murphy Hot Springs, into Dave Creek Canyon, and along the northern ACEC boundary has encroached into the ACEC. Approximately 1 mile of new trail have been pioneered since the late 1990s. This trail is on steep slopes and exhibits rill and gully erosion in the trail.

Table 60. Cover by Category for Plant Communities in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC

Habitats	% cover by category										
	Shrub Cover	Rabbitbrush cover	Native perennial grass	Native forbs	Litter on ground	Bare ground	Rock	Biological soil crust	Crested Wheatgrass	Non-native annual grass	Non-native annual forbs
Non-native annual grassland	1	1	12	3	15	22	4	4	0	66	19
Non-native perennial grassland	2	1	9	1	11	35	1	12	39	1	1
Native perennial grassland	2	1	42	0	34	36	5	2	0	11	10
Rabbitbrush/native grassland	1	8	47	3	45	26	8	4	0	1	2
Salt desert shrub	16	4	9	1	10	42	19	14	0	0	0
Low sagebrush	17	6	5	0	14	30	12	13	0	0	2
Wyoming big sagebrush	19	1	30	0	20	22	9	22	0	3	0

Due to multiple layers being sampled, total percent cover can exceed 100% (e.g. at one point a shrub, grass, and biological soil crust may have been hit). Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Time of year and access precluded all plant communities from being evaluated.

Livestock trailing in the ACEC near Murphy Hot Springs has resulted in an increase of non-native annuals along a portion of the trailing corridor (about 0.8 miles). Other non-native invasive species such as reed canary grass have established in the riparian zone along portions of the Bruneau River near the Bruneau-Jarbidge confluence, at Roberson Trail, and in the vicinity of Hot Creek. A few Russian olive and tamarisk have been documented within the canyons. Noxious weeds, Scotch thistle, Canada thistle, puncture vine, and Russian knapweed have been detected in the vicinity of Indian Hot Springs. Spotted knapweed is present at the Jarbidge Forks Recreation Site.

Salmon Falls Creek ACEC

The Salmon Falls Creek ACEC lies within Salmon Falls Creek Canyon extending from private land near the dam downstream to Balanced Rock Park. The ACEC contains about 5,000 acres (BLM, 1989). Approximately 3,300 acres of the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC overlays the Salmon Falls Creek WSA. The area of overlap runs from Lily Grade to the mouth of Antelope Spring Creek, just north of Salmon Falls Dam. Relevance for the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC includes pristine, scenic, natural features; the area was previously categorized as an Outstanding Natural Area (BLM, 1987).

Scenic Values

Salmon Falls Creek was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in 1993. This determination applies only to the land within 0.25 miles on either side of Salmon Falls Creek. Balanced Rock Park is adjacent to the north end of the existing ACEC. The scenic view from Salmon Falls Dam downstream is impressive and has been frequently photographed. In some areas, basalt lava flows are separated by layers of sediment. Other areas of the canyon are dominated by rhyolite

columns and spires. A few springs on the lower portion of canyon walls provide a contrast with the typical upland vegetation. Currently, the only significant threat to the scenic qualities is wildfire. A wildfire in 2005 burned into the canyon. Burned uplands are now dominated by cheatgrass and invasive annual grass. The topography of the canyon is too steep for rehabilitation using mechanized equipment.

Fish and Wildlife Values

The canyon supports a variety of BLM Sensitive species, including redband trout, prairie falcon, and habitat for spotted and Townsend's big-eared bats. Other wildlife values associated with the ACEC include habitat for a variety of canyon-nesting species, including white-throated swift, canyon wren, rock wren, cliff swallow, violet-green swallow, and barn swallow. Waterfowl nest in the lower gradient areas. Other raptors found in the canyon include western screech owl, long-eared owl, great horned owl, American kestrel, red-tailed hawk and golden eagles. A number of mule deer reside in the canyon, and more mule deer winter on the plateau adjacent to the canyon rim. Mule deer from the southern portion of the planning area are funneled to the area by Cedar Creek and Salmon Falls Creek canyons. The canyons offer some protection from winter storms. Native vegetation including sagebrush and grasses, when not covered with snow, provide forage for wintering big game.

Habitat Evaluation

Two wildfires burned into the ACEC since the late 1980s, removing sagebrush from about 200 acres. In the uplands, burned areas are dominated by cheatgrass. One small basin in a high disturbance area at Lily Grade is also dominated by cheatgrass. As part of the fire rehabilitation for the 2005 Clover Fire, cottonwood poles were planted to replace the burned junipers. The Salmon Falls Creek ACEC was briefly checked in 2006 at Lily Grade; however, site-specific data were not collected. A comparison of slides taken at the same locations in 1981 and 1992 indicated riparian habitat had improved. Removal of the monitoring markers, as well as the height of willow, reed, and reed canary grass, precluded photos at the same locations in 2006. Reed and reed canary grass have expanded in the riparian zone. Both plant species are present from upstream of Lily Grade down through Balanced Rock Park. This invasive non-native species is replacing the native sedges, rushes, cattails, and other herbaceous species in the riparian zone. A few scattered Russian olive are also present. The noxious weed Canada thistle is widely scattered in the ACEC riparian zone.

Current Management

Sand Point Paleontologic, Geologic, and Cultural Resource ACEC

The Sand Point ACEC was designated and a Management Plan was completed in 1988. Protection of the paleontologic and cultural resources within the ACEC from destruction, loss, and erosion is ongoing. While the 1987 Jarbidge RMP directed that scenic and wildlife values be maintained within the ACEC, wildfires have increased invasive non-native annuals and Russian olives have encroached in the riparian zone. Fences were constructed to minimize livestock trailing down steep, erosive slopes in order to ensure vegetative cover is maintained to minimize wind erosion. Fences near the southern boundary of the ACEC have reduced livestock trailing through fossil area. A riparian

pasture grazed every third year has allowed recovery of the stream side vegetation. Since the construction of the fence creating the riparian pasture, the old trailing rills are stabilizing and revegetating.

The management plan for the Sand Point ACEC restricted the use of bulldozers and other mechanical equipment within the ACEC for fire suppression to protect fossil deposits. Surface disturbances are allowed when directly related to studies or research on the cultural, paleontologic, or geological resources present. No research is currently being conducted on fossils in the ACEC. Surface disturbances must be mitigated to blend with the existing topography and visual aspects of the site so as to be substantially unnoticeable (BLM, 1988). The area has not been withdrawn from mineral entry as directed in the 1987 RMP. New buildings have not been constructed in the ACEC.

The 1987 Jarbidge RMP directed the BLM to obtain an easement through private lands to ensure access to the Sand Point ACEC. While the easement has not been obtained, the private landowner has agreed to let BLM have administrative access.

Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC for Bighorn Sheep and Cultural Resources

The Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC was designated; however, a management plan was not prepared due to a change in policy that de-emphasized HMPs. The 1987 Jarbidge RMP directed bighorn sheep habitat be protected, maintained, or improved to a good ecological condition class in the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC. The lack of fire rehabilitation and spread of cheatgrass has resulted in a downward vegetation change over several thousand acres because the native vegetation did not recover.

The 1987 Jarbidge RMP directed the protection and enhancement of approximately 84,000 acres of California bighorn sheep habitat in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC, including the West Fork of the Bruneau River and the Jarbidge River system and the Arch Canyon area. Wildfires and subsequent lack of rehabilitation have resulted in an increase in exotic annuals in several locations. In at least one area near Murphy Hot Springs, livestock trailing is contributing to an increase in exotic annuals. The majority of the grazing allotments allow late season winter grazing, which overlaps critical periods for bighorn sheep and other wintering big game, reduces forage available for big game, and displaces big game from preferred habitats.

The management priority for the canyons is for bighorns and other wildlife in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC. Livestock management measures were to be implemented where necessary to prevent livestock access to canyons. Maintenance of the fence near the Albert Taylor Cabin has reduced livestock incursions down Columbet Creek in the ACEC. Livestock water sources were not to be developed within 1 mile of bighorn sheep habitat in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC unless adverse effects could be mitigated. This buffer is intended to function to maintain separation between bighorn and livestock (BLM, 1987). Thirteen new livestock water developments, some stock water haul, and an unknown number salt/supplement sites are within the ACEC and the 1-mile buffer. No mitigation was implemented for water development projects. The plant communities near these water sources, as well as natural waters (playas), now contain invasive species due,

in part, to livestock concentrating at these sites. Other impacts include increased competition for forage and displacement of bighorn to more marginal habitat.

No conversions from cattle to sheep are allowed in allotments containing bighorn sheep habitat in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC, unless a satisfactory separation can be maintained by fences or topographic features. No conversions from cattle to sheep have occurred.

Public lands within bighorn habitat in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC have been retained in Federal ownership. No surface occupancy is allowed for oil and gas and geothermal exploration or development within the habitat area of the ACEC. The existing jasper mines in the canyon predate the creation of the ACEC.

Activities or developments which would impair the scenic quality of the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC area are not allowed and the area is managed as VRM Class I or II.

The 1987 Jarbidge RMP directed motorized vehicle allowed only on designated roads and trails in the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC. Routes were never designated, and a number of new trails have appeared. Others have been extended within the ACEC.

Salmon Falls Creek ACEC

A land use plan amendment created the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC in 1989 with a rim-to-rim designation to protect the Salmon Falls Creek Canyon for its natural and scenic values.

Hagerman Paleontologic ACEC

The Hagerman Paleontologic ACEC was designated; however the areas was transferred to the NPS in 1988 and is now the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument.

Management Opportunities

Public and internal scoping comments included recommendations to increase the number of ACECs and modify existing ACECs. All nominated and existing ACECs and proposed changes to existing ACECs will be reviewed and evaluated for meeting relevance and importance criteria. Nominated ACECs meeting relevance and importance criteria will be considered as proposed ACECs and will be assessed for whether special management is required for any relevant and important values. ACEC designations and any special management identified for them apply only to public lands. In the event private or state land within the ACEC boundary is acquired, the acreage would be added to and managed as part of the ACEC.

Nominated ACECs

Nominated modifications to existing ACECs

Sand Point ACEC: An extension to the Sand Point ACEC was nominated through internal scoping. The extension would consist of a 148-acre parcel BLM acquired in 2001 to the north and east of the existing Sand Point ACEC, referred to as the Morgan Property. The enlarged Sand Point ACEC would include a total of approximately 960 acres of public land.

Salmon Falls Creek ACEC: An extension to the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC was

nominated by IDFG. The western boundary of the ACEC would be expanded 1 mile west of the canyon rim from Salmon Falls Dam to the Cedar Creek Canyon confluence. The extension would cover an additional 9,600 acres of public land and include approximately 15,000 acres of public land.

Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC: Two nominations concerning modifications to the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC were received during scoping. The first modification was nominated by C.E. Brackett Cattle Co., Chet and Kim Brackett, Brackett Livestock Inc., Brackett Ranches Limited Partnership, Bert and Paula Brackett, Ira and Kim Brackett, Gus and Kimberly Brackett, Jake Brackett, and a representative of Simplot Livestock Company. This nomination would restrict the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC to a rim-to-rim designation north of Sheep's Head Draw to the current northern boundary of the ACEC and would drop ACEC designation south of the WSA boundary on the Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers. This change would reduce the current ACEC by approximately 28,000 acres to approximately 57,000 acres of public land.

A second modification nominated by Western Watersheds Project was an expansion of the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC. One new ACEC nomination discussed below, the Jarbidge Forks ACEC, reflects a potential expansion of the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC.

New areas nominated as ACECs

Purple Sage ACEC: The Purple Sage ACEC was nominated through internal scoping. It would run from the northern boundary of the current Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC north to the private land boundary and would include the canyon and breaks up to an existing route. The Purple Sage ACEC would include approximately 970 acres of public land.

Sagebrush Sea ACEC: The Sagebrush Sea ACEC was nominated by Western Watersheds Project. The Sagebrush Sea ACEC would extend from Salmon Falls Creek on the east to the Bruneau River on the west, from the southern boundary of the planning area north to the road extending from Balanced Rock to Crows Nest, southwest along the road to the private land known as Clover Crossing, then follow the east canyon rim of Clover Creek to its confluence with the Bruneau River. The nominated ACEC would include the Diamond A Desert, Inside Desert, and Jarbidge Foothill areas. The Sagebrush Sea ACEC would encompass approximately 960,000 acres of public land. The ACEC would overlap portions of the existing Bruneau-Jarbidge River and Salmon Falls Creek ACECs and the nominated Jarbidge Foothills, Jarbidge Forks, Inside Desert, and Inside Lakes ACECs.

Jarbidge Foothills ACEC: The Jarbidge Foothills ACEC was nominated by CDC and through internal scoping. The nominated ACEC would extend from Salmon Falls Creek on the east to the existing boundary of the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC on the west, and from the southern boundary of the planning area north to

the Three Creek Highway. The Jarbidge Foothills ACEC would encompass approximately 140,000 acres of public land.

Inside Desert ACEC: The Inside Desert ACEC was nominated by CDC, Western Watersheds Project, and the Wilderness Society, as well as through internal scoping. This nominated ACEC lies roughly between Clover Butte to the north, Middle Butte to the south, Clover Creek on the east, and the current Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC boundary to the west; most of this area is occupied by slickspot peppergrass. The Inside Desert ACEC would include approximately 58,000 acres of public land.

Jarbidge Forks ACEC: The Jarbidge Forks ACEC was nominated through internal scoping; this ACEC also addresses the request by Western Watersheds Project to expand the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC. The Jarbidge Forks ACEC would extend from the confluence of the Jarbidge River and its East Fork, upstream on both forks. The ACEC would generally be a rim-to-rim designation, but would also cover some side drainages and tributaries and some of the uplands between the tributaries and the Jarbidge Rivers. Tributaries to the Jarbidge River include portions of Dave, Buck, Deer, and Jack Creeks as well as Morgan Draw. The Jarbidge Forks ACEC would include approximately 11,000 acres of public land, nearly 5,000 acres of which are within the current Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC.

Inside Lakes ACEC: The Inside Lakes ACEC was nominated by CDC and Western Watersheds Project and through internal scoping. This ACEC would consist of 25 playas in the northern portion of the Diamond A Desert and an upland area east of the Jarbidge River and Bruneau River Canyons, most of which are occupied by Davis peppergrass. Playas would be buffered by 0.5 miles for habitat protection. The Inside Lakes ACEC would include approximately 13,000 acres of public land.

Middle Snake River ACEC: The Middle Snake River ACEC was nominated by CDC and through internal scoping. The Middle Snake River ACEC would lie along the Snake River between Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument on the east and the private boundary just north of Interstate 84 on the west. The ACEC would extend south about 5 miles and would include all of the BLM-managed islands in the Snake River from Lower Salmon Falls Dam to the Pasadena Valley area. This ACEC would include approximately 7,000 acres of public land.